



House Finance Committee

April 8, 2021

RI Child Care is Essential Act (H-5672)

Our names are Minerva Waldron and Veronica Manfredi and we are the owners/directors of two child care centers, one located in Providence and the other in Johnston. In our centers, we serve children from 6 weeks up to 12 years old. We strongly support **RI Child Care is Essential Act (H-5672)**. In our centers, about 95% of our families receive child care assistance and these families are of low income backgrounds. We are committed to provide our children with a high-quality environment regardless of their socioeconomic background.

We continue to work diligently with BrightStars to improve and provide high quality programs for the early learners in our community. We currently have a rating of four-star rating in both of our centers. As we all know, providing high quality services does not come cheap. Although the much-needed rate increase has helped, it is not enough to properly compensate our staff. We strongly **RI Child Care is Essential Act (H-5672)** to boost rates for providing high quality child care.

As Early Childhood Providers, we strive to employ highly qualified staff members. These teachers encourage and promote lifelong learning experiences with enriched environments for our children. Unfortunately, these teachers are currently making minimum wage and thus are forced to live paycheck-to-paycheck. We need to keep in mind that these are the same teachers educating our future members of society and deserve to be compensated for the wonderful foundation they are creating for our children. In the past, members of our staff have left our program to seek employment at McDonald's, Walmart, or other retail stores because "they can make more money there." Our educators deserve better!

By supporting **RI Child Care is Essential Act (H-5672)**, we will be able to continue providing high quality services to our families. Currently, the rate provided by CCAP is insufficient for us providers to continue accepting and enrolling low-income families in our centers. We **MUST** increase our staff members' salaries and without the approval of this bill, we will not be able to afford it.

Over the Rainbow Learning Centers
Quality Child Care for Children 6 weeks to 12 years old
1269 Plainfield St., Johnston ~~401-383-4664
50 Niantic Ave., Providence~~401-383-0068



Without your support, we will be forced to reduce the quality care provided to our infants and toddlers or all together reject children with CCAP. As explained above, we are committed to serving the neediest children within our communities. They deserve to be part of a high-quality program. Our goal is to help children build a strong foundation on which to begin lifelong learning and to launch a positive sense of self, respect for others, and to make positive contributions to the world.

Thank you for taking the time to read our testimony and for your support!

Minerva Waldron

Director

Veronica Manfredi

Assistant Director

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